

Burma the Contented



The Eng-Daw-Yd Pagoda, Burma.

(Prepared by the National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.)

While there is a considerable amount of unrest in many parts of India proper, the people of Burma, which is governed as a part of India and yet is geographically separate from it, seem to be living contentedly. Geographical and social conditions and the economic situation flowing from them undoubtedly have much to do with this. Burma knows little of the fear of famine or the pinch of poverty. Its lands are productive, it is rich in minerals, it is not over-populated, and it is free from the elaborate caste system which is a tremendous handicap to India, both socially and economically.

Kipling and practically all other writers about the East have pointed out repeatedly that it is difficult at best for westerners to understand the oriental peoples. If the observer from the West wishes to tackle this admittedly difficult problem by easy stages, perhaps he could find no better place to start than Burma. In a number of senses there is less of a gulf between the life and customs of the Burmese, and those of the West than will be found if the comparison is made with any other eastern country.

The Indian is in most cases a sober individual. The lower castes must take life with desperate seriousness because of its hardness and the difficulty of clinging to it. The higher castes are sedate and given to speculative philosophy. The Chinaman is an enigma. His emotions are difficult to fathom. The people of the Mohammedan countries are marked by a quiet dignity.

The Burmese Love Life.

In contrast with these other peoples of Asia, and almost alone among them, the Burmese are frank, open, happy—lovers of life. Their women are not secluded, but are among the freest women in the world. Both men and women are lovers of music and wearers of bright clothing. Because of their spontaneity and friendliness they have been dubbed "the Irish of the Orient."

Burma is a country of many tribes, but practically all of them are of the same racial strain. Shans, Karens, Kachins, Chins and Palaungs are among those living in the outlying parts of the country, though the Karens and to a certain extent the others are to be found in parts of lower Burma, a more heavily settled section which is most easy of access to the outside world. It is the Burmese, however, who constitute the dominant element with the highest culture, and give color to Burma as it is known to most westerners who visit the land.

The Burma of the Burmese, that is lower Burma and the basin of the great Irrawaddy river, is a land of pagodas, the shrines of Buddhism. Thousands upon thousands of these bell-shaped structures surmounted by gilded spires and tinkling bells have been built. Many of them have fallen into decay, but others are built each year. They are the symbols of the hold which the Buddhist religion has upon the people of Burma. It is their belief that the surest way of "acquiring merit" and achieving holy rest after death is to erect a pagoda; and very few Burmese who are able to add to the country's forest of pagoda spires fail to do so.

No Aristocracy, Few Poor.

There are no noble classes among the Burmese, no aristocracy, few who are very wealthy, and few very poor. While the caste system as a system does not exist in the country, there are several classes of people who are looked upon as degraded by their vocations and with whom practically no intercourse is had by the majority of the people. Unfortunately, too, these classes are hereditary. They are the grave diggers, the descendants of the former pagoda slaves and the beggars. The general attitude toward these unfortunate is one of the contradictions in Burmese character; and there are others. Their religion requires kindness toward animals, and Burmese will

not even become drivers of vehicles in cities because they feel that such a calling entails a certain measure of cruelty of horses. Yet their attitude toward crippled and maimed humans is the height of unkindness. Such unfortunate are considered to be in the degraded classes along with the grave diggers and the beggars, and are denied association with the normal population.

One custom among the Burmese that cannot fail to arouse comment from westerners is the prevalence of smoking and the peculiar turn it has taken. Smoking is indulged in literally by men, women and children. Cigarettes and cigars of a huge size are preferred, often a foot or more in length and with a circumference in proportion. Children of all ages use these gigantic "smokes," and it is not uncommon even to see an infant in arms puffing away at a huge cheroot. The habit is not as injurious as might be expected because the tobacco used is adulterated with a considerable proportion of milder materials.

Their Marriage Customs.

Marriage in Burma is not a matter of great ceremony or ritualism. Formally eating together, usually before witnesses, constitutes a couple man and wife. Though the theory is otherwise, a girl usually selects her husband, and is given to him by her parents. If a bride is dissatisfied with her husband she may run away from him and return to her parents. She is promptly returned by them, but may repeat the procedure. After she has run away three times and been returned three times, she may leave for good, it being assumed that it is impossible for her husband to retain her. She is then in effect divorced.

The rule works the other way about also. If parents do not consider a suitor eligible and prohibit a match, the maiden has only to run away to him three times, after which the parents must not interfere, but must consider the marriage a thing accomplished.

Where Burma touches India proper on the latter's eastern border, it is bounded by Bengal and Assam. Farther to the north it touches southeastern Tibet. Along its eastern border, Burma is in contact with China for a considerable distance. The Chinese at one time claimed sovereignty over the land. The lower part of Burma's eastern boundary is formed by French Cochinchina and Siam; and to the south and west lies the Bay of Bengal. The total area of Burma is slightly less than that of Texas, our largest state, while its population is in excess of 12,000,000, several million more than that of our most populous state, New York.

Climate and Resources.

The greater part of Burma is in the tropics and during half the year much of it is very hot. This heat is especially trying to Europeans in parts of the delta region where the humidity is high. In some sections more than 20 feet of rain falls each year. There is considerable loss of life among natives in some parts of the country from snakes, spiders, poisonous insects and wild animals. Just as India has its Simla to which officials and others journey in the hot season, so Burma has its hill station, Maymyo, only 42 miles from Mandalay, but nearly 2,400 feet higher. This summer capital makes it possible for Europeans to stand the rigors of the Burma climate.

Burma's mineral wealth has long made it one of the treasure houses of the Orient. One of the richest silver-lead ore bodies in the world is situated in the northeastern section. Mogoke, a short distance north of Mandalay, largely supplies the world with rubies. Silver and precious stones were among the things most highly prized in the old East. But Burma also possesses modern treasures: tungsten, a necessity in an age of steel and electricity; tin, essential in performing the world's sanitary work and in equipping its households; and petroleum, the fuel of today.

NATIONAL CAPITAL AFFAIRS

U. S. Pacific Naval Bases Inadequate



WASHINGTON.—Because of the inadequacy of naval bases the United States, according to navy authorities, is totally unprepared to fight a successful war in the western Pacific.

The most advanced base we now possess is at Pearl Harbor, in the Hawaiian Islands. Its facilities, however, are scarcely more than rudimentary. With the exception of a dry dock the equipment is insufficient to care for the needs of half the navy in time of peace, let alone the whole navy in time of war. Another dry dock and construction of a multitude of channels and berths, as well as the establishment of vast repair work and storage warehouses for supplies, are necessary, according to the Navy department.

Until the Hawaiian islands are made an adequate base the American navy will be unable to operate effectively in the western Pacific. Lacking such a base, it would be necessary to supply the fighting fleet almost entirely from the Pacific coast bases, the distance to which would be a severe handicap on operations.

Even the Pacific coast bases are inadequate to the demands of the whole navy if stationed in the Pacific, even in time of peace. It would be necessary to send ships back to the Atlantic coast for major repair work.

The Navy department is urging congress for appropriations to begin the construction of Pacific coast and Hawaiian island bases which it will require several years to complete. The senate is favorable, but the house opposed to such appropriations.

The Parks-McKean board, which surveyed the needs of bases in the Pacific, recommended the expenditure of \$27,184,000 in the Hawaiian Islands, \$44,065,750 at Bremerton, Wash., \$42,313,200 at San Francisco, \$27,790,000 at San Diego, \$5,000,000 at San Pedro, \$5,000,000 at the Columbia river, \$3,489,600 at Port Angeles, Wash., and \$2,871,000 at Keyport, Wash., a total of \$157,738,550.

"Horse Sense and Heart Sense" Needed

THE housing situation with high rents is the most serious problem confronting the government, in the opinion of Secretary of Labor Davis. It is in just such a situation as Davis describes that congress and the state legislatures, under the Supreme court ruling, have the power to enact emergency legislation curbing rent gouging. Davis holds high rents the greatest single barrier to a readjustment such as is essential to permanent prosperity.

"Because of high rents and inadequate housing," he says, "families double up, sometimes two or three to a home. It is not too much to say that the loss in morale and morals due to the housing conditions in many cities today is one of the greatest dangers to our whole social structure."

The report of the recent state investigation into housing conditions in Chicago showed that 500,000 people in that city were living in the most unwholesome conditions, sleeping sometimes three and four in a bed, five and six to a room. Reports from other cities hard hit by the housing shortage and high rents show an alarming increase in sickness and disease. In some cities the birth rate of illegitimate children has increased 50 per cent.

Davis has ordered a special investi-



gation of conditions in some of the worst centers. Federal investigators have been sent to several cities.

"What we need in dealing with the situation," Davis says, "is not only horse sense, but heart sense. It is not merely a matter of houses and rents, of dollars and cents.

"Some agreement must be reached by the building trades and the building industries that will make possible a resumption of home building.

"The building industry is the keystone of our entire industrial structure, and once construction work can be set under way again the whole employment and industrial situation will be relieved.

"Today, however, we have the paradoxical situation where it is cheaper to travel than to pay rent. There are 250,000 people, it is estimated, living in automobiles."

House Favors U. S. Army of 150,000 Men



IT WOULD appear that official Washington has more than one idea as to the proper size of the American army. Anyway, the small-army men in the house, combining with the Democrats, outgeneraled the Republican leaders and succeeded in amending the army bill so as to fix the size of the army at 150,000. This was done despite the request of Secretary Weeks that the army's size should not be reduced below 175,000.

The house adjourned without passing the bill after a prolonged debate during which the Republican leaders pleaded for a good-sized army because of the disturbed world conditions.

The bill provided for an army of

168,000. Representative Kahn, chairman, military affairs committee, offered an amendment for an army of 175,000. Representative Fish presented an amendment to this for an army of 150,000.

The Kahn amendment, as amended, was defeated by a vote of 97 to 74, and then Representative Byrnes of South Carolina moved that the army should be fixed at 150,000. This was adopted by a vote of 109 to 82.

By reducing the army to this size the appropriation for the army for the next fiscal year is reduced from \$83,000,000 to \$72,000,000.

Representative Kahn and Republican Leader Mondell pleaded in vain for acceptance of the recommendations of Secretary Weeks and the army officers.

The small-army men admitted that the world was in a most chaotic condition, but argued that the addition of a few thousand men to the American army would not settle that chaotic condition.

They said, also, that congress should pay more attention to the people and less to the general staff.

Wanted: "Secretary of the Fine Arts"

SECRETARY OF THE FINE ARTS is the latest proposed addition to the cabinet. What's more the League of Artists has been formed to urge the proposition. It is stated that J. Massey Rhio, the New York sculptor, made the proposal to President Harding and that the President asked that "the artists of the country who favor the idea get their arguments in tangible form and submit them to him." The purposes of the movement include the following:

To further contemporary American art and its relation to national life. To seek to have embodied in the Constitution of the United States the words "fine arts," as well as "scientific and useful arts."

To arouse our national government to a realization and need of a minister of art with portfolio, and to give definite and concrete support to the artist. To establish better conditions for the development of American art.

To foster the unknown artist by giving him an equal opportunity.

To maintain an advisory school committee to work for the betterment of art instruction and art education throughout the United States, and



more especially in the city of New York.

To establish an interchange of city exhibitions.

To promote general and active interest in the creation of a large public exhibition building in the city of New York.

To seek the co-operations of the art museums, patrons, art lovers, art dealers, architects, interior decorators and artists.

To act for the improvement of the materials of the artists' craft and to establish a closer co-operation between the producer of same and the artist.

To improve exhibition conditions and encourage sales.

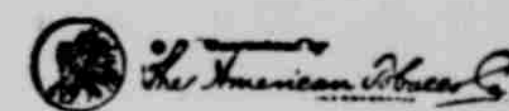
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CONDENSATIONS

Beauty is always eloquent.

There are 12,000,000 negroes in the United States.

A business man always reads the postscript of women's letters first.

Nothing succeeds like success—in stirring up detraction.

Hope is the bridge over the stream of disappointment.

Celebrate at least one day in the week. Order beefsteak.

Seventy-five per cent of the ingredients of remorse is usually fright.

Not much of a victory is won when a man obeys with a grumble.

A man is merely as dull as his point of view.

Keep your eye on the man who never makes mistakes.

Minds of too many men are filled with useless knowledge.

A man is as old as he feels—and usually considerably older.

Airplanes should enable men to rise above their troubles, but they don't.

Most men find it easier to get in debt than to get out, but some are unable to get in at all.

Your cup of joy will never run over if the bartender is allowed to handle the bottle.

If a man owns street-railway stock, he never recommends walking as an exercise.

SALESMEN Wanted To Sell

Our West Virginia Grown Nursery Stock. Fine canvassing outfit FREE. Cash Commission Paid Weekly. WRITE for terms. THE GOLD NURSERY CO., Mason City, W. Va.

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MILLIONS to be made by new patented process for making gas. Share the PROF. ITS. Every \$10 put in now should make \$100. Get particulars. DAWSON, 19 Cortlandt St., NEW YORK.

Reasonable Supposition.

"A hant, or something, is raising thunder at Gabe Hornboggle's house," related a neighbor. "I was there tuther night, and after we'd set for a spell it commenced. The table was flopped over by unseen hands, three drawers of the bureau slid out by their selves and dumped all the stuff on the floor, a flock of spoons came floating in from the kitchen, a gun in the corner fell down and shot one of the dogs, and all such as that. I never seed such goin'-on in my life!"

"Then you hadn't never drunk none of Gabe's bone-dry lick before?" inquired a resident of Mount Plzgy, Ark.—Kansas City Star.

Women Proving More Politic.

It is not an uncommon sight now to see a young girl get up and offer her seat in the subway to an elderly woman, whose entrance has been ignored by the male passengers. Such usually brings some blushing humble man to his feet with a stammering offer of "have my seat," but the climax was reached the other evening in an up-town restaurant when a middle-aged woman took a seat at the same table with one of her own sex, a stranger to her, and on finishing dinner politely inquired:

"Do you mind if I smoke?"—New York Sun.

Accident Averted.

J. B. Frix of Richmond, Va., who is organizing the National Teachers' Training association, says that a little negro whom the other called "Young Bird" on account of the size of his mouth, was standing on the railroad track, and another one called out: "Hey dere, boy, git off dat tract. Ef de engineer would come along and see dat mouf of yone, he'd think it was a car shed and run his train right in."

A divorce suit is usually more expensive than a marriage suit.

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"There's a Reason" For sale by all grocers